

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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-----022010 172124Z /63

R 170702Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9118
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL UDORN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0349

BANGKOK ALSO PASS UDORN ELECTRICALLY

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR MILI LA TH US
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE RE LAO PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH

REF: STATE 61861

1. I CALLED ON DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER NOUPHAN SITH-
PASAY MARCH 16 TO DISCUSS THE LAO PRIME MINISTER'S
MARCH 2 CHARGE THAT THE U.S. WAS REACTIVATING ITS BASES
IN THAILAND.

2. I TOLD NOUPHAN THAT I HAD JUST BEEN TO BANGKOK TO
MEET MY FAMILY AND BRING THEM TO VIENTIANE. WHILE
THERE, I HAD HAD A CHANCE TO DISCUSS THE BASE ISSUE
WITH AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE. I HAD ALSO EXCHANGED TELE-
GRAMS WITH THE DEPARTMENT. I WAS THUS ABLE TO ASSURE
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NOUPHAN THAT THERE WAS NO TRUTH WHATSOEVER TO THE
CHARGE THAT WE WERE REACTIVATING OUR BASES IN THAILAND.
I HAD BEEN PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THEIR REMOVAL TWO
YEARS AGO, AND AS A RESULT OF MY FACE-TO-FACE AND TELE-
GRAPHIC INQUIRIES OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS, I COULD
STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT THERE WERE STILL NO U.S. BASES
IN THAILAND.

3. I EXPLAINED TO NOUPHAN THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE U.S. WAS THE BUSINESS ONLY OF THE RTG AND THE USG, JUST AS LAO-SOVIET RELATIONS WERE THE BUSINESS ONLY OF THE LPDR AND THE USSR AND LAO-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS WERE THE BUSINESS ONLY OF THE LPDR AND THE SRV. NEVERTHELESS, I THOUGHT THAT LAO-U.S. RELATIONS SHOULD BE BASED ON TRUTH AND FACTUAL ACCURACY. ACCORDINGLY, I BRIEFED NOUPHAN ON THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND, EXPLAINING THAT WE MAINTAINED A 40-PERSON JUSMAG, A 23-PERSON MEDICAL RESEARCH LAB, AND AN ATTACHE CONTINGENT IN EMBASSY BANGKOK. I EXPLAINED THAT U.S. NAVY SHIPS MADE OCCASIONAL PORT CALLS PRIMARILY FOR CREW R& R, AND THAT FLIGHTS BY SMALL UNARMED TRANSPORT PLANES CAME THROUGH UTAPAO FROM TIME TO TIME.

4. NOUPHAN, WHO HAD A NOTETAKER PRESENT, THANKED ME FOR THE INFORMATION AND SAID HE APPRECIATED MY MAKING A SPECIAL EFFORT TO CALL ON HIM AND BRIEF HIM. HE EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD BEEN IN BANGKOK TO ATTEND THE ESCAP MEETING, HE HAD NOT BEEN AWARE OF THE BASES PASSAGE IN KAYSONE'S SPEECH, BUT HA HAD BEEN ASKED TO COMMENT BY THE BANGKOK PRESS CORPS. HE SAID HE HAD TOLD THE NEWSMEN THAT "I DO NO KNOW" OF THE BASES BUT THAT IF THE PRIME MINISTER HAD MENTIONED THEM THEN
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THERE MUST BE SOME PROBLEM.

5. IN THIS CONNECTION, NOUPHAN MENTIONED THE FACT THAT LAOS WAS FACED WITH A SERIOUS SECURITY AND INSURGENT PROBLEM. I ASSURED HIM THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS AND DID NOT IN ANY WAY SUPPORT ANTI-LPDR GROUPS IN LAOS. NOUPHAN THANKED ME AGAIN FOR THIS ASSURANCE AND FOR MY INFORMATION.

6. NOUPHAN EXPLAINED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH WAS MEANT ONLY TO BE A REPORT ON LAO INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR AND PROSPECTS FOR THE NEXT YEAR. "THE SPEECH WAS NOT INTENDED TO BE AN ATTACK ON ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY," NOUPHAN SAID. ALTHOUGH I WAS WOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK BY THIS STATEMENT, I THANKED NOUPHAN FOR HIS INTERPRETATION OF KAYSONE'S INTENTIONS.

7. COMMENT: I THINK THIS IS AS CLOSE AS ANY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CAN COME TO ADMITTING THAT HE WAS SANDBAGGED, THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT, AND THAT HE WAS SORRY.

8. NOUPHAN'S STATEMENT THAT KAYSONE DID NOT MEAN TO ATTACK ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY IS DIFFICULT TO SQUARE WITH MUCH NF WHAT WAS SAID IN THE SPEECH AND WITH ITS GENERAL TONE. WE COULD BE FACED WITH A REPLAY OF THE OLD SIHANOUK PLOY -- SPEECHES TO DOMESTIC AUDIENCES IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE ARE NOT MEANT TO BE HEARD BY FOREIGNERS AND ARE NOT MEANT TO AFFECT FOREIGN RELATIONS. WE COULD ALSO BE FACED WITH A STATE OF MIND WHICH MAINTAINS THAT SINCE ALL RIGHT-THINKING PEOPLE AGREE THAT LAOS IS SURROUNDED BY EVIL CAPITALIST MONSTERS IT IS NOT INSULTING OR EMEN SLIGHTLY RUDE TO CALL THEM CAPITALIST MONSTERS. OR, LASTLY, NOUPHAN'S SAYING THAT KAYSONE WAS NOT TRYING TO ATTACK ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY MIGHT BE A WAY OF APOLOGIZING. ALL CONFIDENTIAL

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THREE INTERPRETATIONS PROBABLY HAVE ELEMENTS OF TRUTH IN THEM.
ROBERTS

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